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КРОСС-КУЛЬТУРНЫЙ МЕНЕДЖМЕНТ CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Учебное пособие



МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
УРАЛЬСКИЙ ФЕДЕРАЛЬНЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
ИМЕНИ ПЕРВОГО ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИИ Б. Н. ЕЛЬЦИНА

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В учебном пособии освещаются вопросы управления отношениями, возникающими на границе национальных и организационных структур. Авторская интерпретация ключевых понятий и концептов курса и конкретные примеры помогут студентам анализировать все уровни культуры, преодолевать коммуникативные барьеры и эффективно общаться с носителями различных культурных традиций.

Для студентов, изучающих международный менеджмент, международные отношения, а также для специалистов в сфере коммуникаций.

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PREFACE

The idea of this book began to take shape back in the 1990-s and is largely based on the author's personal experience. In 1995, I spent an academic year in the USA as an exchange student. I studied at the US high school and lived with an American host family, which certainly affected my worldview and enabled me to open up new cultural horizons. I realized that this experience would stay with me forever and it would be great to share it with a larger audience. Deep inside I knew that there had to be a way to incorporate this tremendous experience into my future both from personal and professional point of view. Starting from that moment I became determined that cross-cultural experience and anything related to it should become an indispensable part of my life. Luckily, it happened. I entered the Department of Journalism of the Ural Federal University and wrote a diploma on foreign media, where I compared Russian and American approach to news coverage.

Moreover, I was also fortunate to work for a number of international projects, including Joint River Management Program, established by the European Union and aimed at water quality assessment of trans-boundary rivers. We had people from many different countries working on this project, including Russia, Kazakhstan, Germany, England, Ukraine, Georgia. I also worked for the local office of American Councils for International Education, first as an alumni assistant and later as recruiting assistant. I got to travel with our American boss across the Ural region and while on the way to the city of our destination or back home, we would talk a lot about cultural issues, people's behavior under different cultural conditions. A few years later, I decided to focus on my academic career and started working on my PhD, which again had to do with foreign media and extreme news coverage. Upon completing my PhD,

I was invited to work as a lecturer at the Department of Journalism and that is when my idea of writing a book on cross-cultural management was developed. Within last five years, we had a number of guests from different countries, who came to speak about media issues and the state of journalism in the framework of conferences and discussion sessions. We had experts from Poland, Finland, Hungary, Sweden, USA, China and Argentina. With most of our guests, we continue to keep in touch and look forward to having mutual projects in future.

I am sure that the same or even more considerable amount of international contacts exists at many departments of educational centers all over Russia. The only thing that remains unclear for some of the local scholars and nonprofessionals is how to actually communicate with people from abroad. “How to get a message through to a representative of another culture” — seems to be one of the most common questions in terms of cross-cultural management. In this respect, the role of cross-cultural awareness in today’s life should not be underestimated.

Therefore, the main goal of this manual is to introduce students to the main concepts and various definitions of cross-cultural communication. One of the top objectives of the course is to provide students with basic theory related to cross cultural communication, that will enable them to distinguish the attributes of another culture, no matter what code system is being used, and be aware of significant cultural elements present in the behavior of an individual or a group.

Consequently, among the objectives pursued by the author were the following:

- to explain the specifics of cross-cultural management;
- to explain possible ways of understanding different aspects of cultures;
- to introduce the students to the concept of cultural literacy offered by Eric Donald Hirsch and the cultural dimensions theory presented by Geert Hofstede;
- to introduce the students to the phenomenon of culture shock and ways to manage cross cultural conflicts.

The manual consists of theoretical part (seven chapters), practical training (seven sets of workshops), Self-Assessment Tasks, Exam

Questions, and Bibliography. The students are supposed to study each chapter carefully and afterwards complete two individual assignments. There are five different types of assignments — article, essay, letter, review, presentation, or case study. Upon finishing working with the last chapter, the students should proceed to Self-Assessment Tasks. This section is meant to help students better evaluate their personal progress and give an idea of what part of the course should perhaps be studied more carefully or revised. After completing the part Self-Assessment Tasks the student might want to move on to the section Exam Question to get an idea in order to prepare more effectively to the final exam.

Approximate time spent for working on every chapter — five academic hours. It is supposed, however, that the students will work independently, studying additional sources and analyzing material offered by numerous electronic sources. Thus, the total time for working with the entire manual is 35–40 academic hours.

The students majoring in Communication, Public Relations, Business Administration and International Management should find the following manual useful.

Chapter 1

THE SPECIFICS OF CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Definitions of the key terms — culture, communication, management. The theory of cultural dimensions offered by Geert Hofstede. The Iceberg Analogy or Model

Cross-cultural management is a relatively new field of study and is based on theories and research from the following disciplines:

- cross-cultural communication;
- international management;
- psychology of communication.

As we see it, the key issues here are “culture”, “communication”, and “management”. What is the best way to define culture? According to the concept which is being commonly used both by the experts and the representative of mass audience, culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, and attitudes. It is also related to meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. The word “culture” derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin “colere”, which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture. “It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth”, Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London, told Live Science [Zimmerman et al.].

Today culture is also regarded the following way:

- culture is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people;
- culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behavior; that is the totality of a person’s learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behavior through social learning.

Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.

Southgate College in London, told Live Science [Zimmerman et al.].

A Spanish liberal philosopher and sociologist José Ortega y Gasset defined culture "labor, creation of human things; creation of science, moral principles, and art. When we talk about higher or lower level of culture, we are talking about larger or smaller ability to create human things" [Graham, p. 300]. However, in this case where can we draw a line between the culture and the civilization? a German philosopher Oswald Schpengler, one the founders of the contemporary culture philosophy, focuses on the collective soul as integral part of culture. As for the civilization, the rational principal and intelligence are guiding it [Spengler].

Culture is not something concrete or tangible, as it cannot be seen or touched. However, we know it exists because people from the same society have roughly the same customs or behavior, basic beliefs and values, and way of viewing the world. Culture causes this to happen. We informally or tacitly acquire our primary culture well before adolescence during our formative years as our basic personality is taking shape. The concept of culture has always had a somewhat psychoanalytic meaning, with a heavy emphasis on the importance of its hidden or unconscious aspects [Weaver].

It is likely that spirituality helps to transform the culture to one of the fundamental ethnic-forming factors. Moreover, it is due to the culture the individual is capable of realizing his/her own national identity and perceives himself as part of the certain community with the same historical background, similar values, and aspirations. The person can identify himself with a particular group of people only when he considers himself the bearer of their cultural values. That is what appears to be more significant referring to the national identity than the voice of blood. For example, a leading Latin American literary figure Alejo Carpentier though born in Lausanne to a French father and a Russian mother claimed throughout his life that he was Cuban-born [Weaver].

Culture could be explored in many ways. For instance, each culture could be analyzed in terms of its components: people's behavior, common habits, and customs. Alternatively, we could also contrast and compare some hidden aspects of culture such as unspoken and implicit traditional or mainstream attitudes, values, beliefs, ways of perceiving reality, and types of interaction. Some cultures may promote the ideas of individualism, while others might advocate collectivism and interdependence [Golovleva].

Management is normally understood as:

- a type of activity;
- art and science;
- category of personnel;
- executive office.

The main task of management is to make information, skills, knowledge, and experience the driving force, which in turn will help company or organization's growth in the global marketplace.

As for communication, we believe it to be a process of exchanging messages and information among individuals or groups of individuals. Thus, cross-cultural communication is a process of communication between representative of different cultures and lingual and cultural communities; it is a totality of different forms, attitudes and communication between individuals and groups, that belong to different countries [Golovleva].

The theory of mass communication is considered a relatively new area of study, although cross-cultural contacts date back to the time immemorial. E. Hall and G. Trader were the first ones to introduce the term "cross-cultural communication" by sharing their ideas in the book "Culture and communication", where the authors claimed to perceive culture as communication and vice versa. Even before the theoretical ground for future research had been shaped, Aristotle, G. Leibniz, I. Gerder, I. Kant, V. Humboldt and others, discussed the basic issues.

One of the possible ways to understand and start analyzing culture and cultural traditions of different countries is applying models or algorithms that were suggested by numerous scholars. One of the most common models to analyze the cross-cultural communication is called

the *Iceberg Analogy* or model. It is true that when we meet somebody who comes from a different cultural background, we can very often identify that they are from another country by simply looking at some explicit behavioral characteristic. For example, whenever a foreign tourist appeared in the former Soviet Union, the locals usually had no problems identifying them as most of the foreign guests spoke another language, were wearing bright clothes, and smiled all the time — something the Soviet people rarely did in public. Therefore, what could be placed on *top of the iceberg* is human behavior. When we enter another culture, we usually see the tips of the iceberg or external culture. People speak different language, use different gestures to express their ideas, eat different food and worship in different ways [Weaver]. When a person starts living in another culture, he is capable of adjusting to new customs and life style within a couple of months or even sooner. He can learn the language, get used to local food and family rituals. This is the easiest part of the culture to learn, or the top of the iceberg.

In the middle of an iceberg, we have beliefs. They can be related to politics, religion or economy, and could be sometimes considered contradictory as people can hold different beliefs. If a foreigner interferes this section by for instance, mocking national political system, the locals' reaction might be unpredictable. For example, some people would put it this way: "I myself can make fun of the local government, but I would not tolerate the foreigners doing so".

The most important and much hidden part of the culture is at the base. It is almost entirely learned unconsciously and its basic components include basic values, ways of thinking, and worldviews. This part is the most difficult to understand, analyze and reflect upon.

However, the common mistake made by the people is when we assume that if a person behaves as we do, he thinks as we do and shares the same set of values with us. I remember having an American boss, who was fluent in Russian, loved Russian food, dressed like an average Russian, but she grew up in the USA and therefore was a product of American culture. Therefore, what could be derived from here is the idea, that even when the person acquires some external elements from the local culture, it does not necessarily mean that he has changed from the inside.

Geert Hofstede introduced another theory referring to the complexity of cultural analysis. In particular, his cultural dimensions theory describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior, using a structure derived from factor analysis [Hofstede, p. 240–250].

Here are the dimensions of national cultures, initially offered by Hofstede and specified by Michael Harris Bond and Michael Minkov.

1. Power Distance Index (PDI)

“Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” [Hofstede, p. 205]. Individuals in a society that exhibit a high degree of power distance accept hierarchies in which everyone has a place without the need for justification. Societies with low power distance seek to have equal distribution of power. Cultures that endorse low power distance expect and accept power relations that are consultative or democratic.

2. Individualism (IDV) vs. collectivism

“The degree to which individuals are integrated into groups” [Hofstede, p. 205]. In individualistic societies, the stress is put on personal achievements and individual rights. People are expected to stand up for themselves and their immediate family, and to choose their own affiliations. In contrast, in collectivist societies, individuals act predominantly as members of a lifelong and cohesive group or organization (note: “The word collectivism in this sense has no political meaning: it refers to the group, not to the state”). People have large extended families, which are used as a protection in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

3. Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)

“A society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity” [Hofstede, p. 205]. It reflects the extent to which members of a society attempt to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. People in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance tend to be more emotional. In contrast, low uncertainty avoidance cultures accept and feel comfortable in unstructured situations or changeable environments and try to have as few rules as possible. People in these cultures tend to be more pragmatic, they are more tolerant of change.

4. Masculinity (MAS) vs. Femininity

“The distribution of emotional roles between the genders” [Hofstede, p. 206]. Masculine cultures’ values are competitiveness, assertiveness, materialism, ambition and power, whereas feminine cultures place more value on relationships and quality of life. In masculine cultures, the differences between gender roles are more dramatic and less fluid than in feminine cultures where men and women have the same values emphasizing modesty and caring.

5. Long-term orientation (LTO) vs. short-term orientation describes societies’ time horizon

Long-term oriented societies’ attach more importance to the future. They highlight pragmatic values oriented towards rewards, including persistence, saving and capacity for adaptation. In short-term oriented societies the promoted values are related to the past and the present.

6. Indulgence versus restraint (IVR)

The extent to which members of a society try to control their desires and impulses. Whereas indulgent societies have a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun, restrained societies have a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict norms [Hofstede].

In order to ensure effective cross-cultural management organization one needs to look carefully and analyze both the explicit and the hidden part of the Iceberg — e. g. the way person behaves in public, his appearance and also his ideas, his way of thinking. One of the possible approaches while dealing with a new cultural pattern should be “Not better, not worse, but just different!”.

Therefore, the main goals of the cross-cultural management could be defined the following way:

- a) to understand how national cultures affect management practices;
- d) identify the similarities and differences across cultures in various organizational contexts;
- c) increase effectiveness in global management.

Workshop

Individual assignment 1 (an essay)

Watch an interview with Queen Rania from Jordan. Why, according to Queen Rania people in the West tend to misinterpret the Arab culture? What are the main misconceptions about the Arab culture? Write an essay based on the questions below. Share and discuss with other students.

To watch the video use the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ehpVlauStM>

Individual assignment 2 (a letter)

Write a letter to a foreign friend, who has never been to your home country. Name at least 10 things he/she should be aware of (referring to your culture). Try to incorporate the Iceberg Model.

Chapter 2

CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS AND CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

The impact of culture on the management national style. Time and space as perceived in different cultures. Attitude to time and punctuality. Cross-cultural conflicts and ways to overcome them

The way we communicate is largely determined by our culture. People who come from the same cultural backgrounds normally stick to the similar models of communication. They also share meanings attributed to those messages they receive. The feedback could vary depending on our culture: it could be direct and immediate or indirect and delayed [Weaver].

In the following paragraphs, we will concentrate on the differences that lay down the foundations of different cultures. First, the key question here is what are the main features of particular cultures?

In some cultures, it is assumed that people are honest and trustworthy by nature. Many experts agree that the representatives of the Third World countries tend to rely on the words of mouth and usually do not usually ask for written guarantees. The people in the West would rather rely on the law and are not likely to trust agreements that are not supported by the legal documents.

In some cultures, people tend to perceive themselves in a positive way. They are more likely to deceive the others and keep their failures in secret. While, in some countries people tend to perceive themselves in a negative way. They are more likely to criticize themselves, the quality of their work, rather than praising themselves simply because they were brought up this way.

Representatives of some cultures stick to active and reformatory ideology, according to which the world around them should fit into their life concept. According to this concept, everything should be transformed and reorganized in order for the humans to feel comfortable and secure. The bearers of this concept believe that they should be able to keep

everything under control. Sometimes this even causes ethical dilemmas, for example, when people express their interest and a strong wish to make decisions in such issues as artificial insemination, transplantation of the human organs, cloning, and euthanasia. We are also aware that representatives of the certain culture do not approve of such approach', considering it to be rather aggressive and inappropriate.

In some countries the idea of collective spirit is among the top-ideological concepts, lying at the foundations of the society (former Soviet Union, China, etc.). While in the limelight of the Western culture is the attention to the particular individual and his/her needs. Regarding business communications this could be reflected in the following way: an employer who sticks to the ideas of collectivism is more likely to show professional commitment even when this contradicts his private goals; an employer who was brought up in the individualistic culture will probably tend to leave the job, which prevents him from further promotion.

In some cultures people pay more attention to what has already happened. For example, in the Great Britain both the government and the common people show major respect to the history of their country. In Chinese government is focused on the long-term goals, and people are actively investing in their future. Business Culture in general is heading towards the present, or nearest future.

Generally a social space is understood as physical or virtual space such as a social center, online social media, or other gathering place, where people gather and interact. Henri Lefebvre emphasized that in human society all "space is social: it involves assigning more or less appropriated places to social relations, as social space has thus always been a social product". Social space becomes thereby a metaphor for the very experience of social life — "society experienced alternatively as a deterministic environment or force (*milieu*) and as our very element or beneficent shell (*ambience*)" [Elden, p. 178].

If a Chinese partner invites a European manager to his home, he would share nearly everything he has to be a good host. The guest becomes a close person because of the established close relationship. This is very important in diffuse cultures to build up close relationships in business life. This requires a lot of information, which has to be exchanged

in advance of a business deal. Some may look irrelevant but they are important. Via this procedure, Chinese become capable of getting a more detailed picture about their business partner and their characters [Elden].

As we know, American culture is based on the individualistic concept vs. Russian culture is traditionally characterized as a collective type. According to M. Abalkina-Paap and G. Stephen, Russians are not interested in personal achievements; they show appreciation for family and group ties [Abalkina-Paap, Stephen]. “The Western civilization stick to the individualism. Individual — is sacred... To love oneself and value oneself — this is where the civilized life originates...” [Bogert, p. 5].

This could actually explain why Russians, although being social and empathic, sometimes have difficulties with self-expression. For an average Russian, especially a middle-age person, it would be considered inappropriate to praise his own achievements. This, in turn, has to do with the Soviet ideology, according to which everybody was supposed to work as part of the team on the benefit of the entire society, where the main goal was to build the bright future. People were not encouraged to use the pronoun “I”, speak about themselves and advertise their own accomplishments. People even did not know how to pay compliments and react to them. There is a famous joke about Soviet women’s reaction to a compliment: “Only a Soviet woman, while replying to the compliment about her nice dress, will say modestly: “Oh that is the one I bought last year””.

Even now in the new era of globalization and numerous inter-cultural contacts younger Russians still, feel uncomfortable when asked to praise themselves.

Personal comment

During one of my lectures I gave my students the following task: “Think about at least three reasons to praise yourself”.

— To praise myself? What do you mean? — a female student raised her hand.

— Well, just say something nice to yourself, referring to what you have done today or just pay yourself a compliment? — I tried to encourage them by smiling and saying they have all got something to be proud of.

— Sorry, I cannot do that. I am not used to praising myself.

For most of the students (both females and males) it took some time to figure out what could they praise themselves for? Some kept quiet, some even started feeling anxious about not being able to maintain the task. I assume, American or European students if asked to perform the same task would have felt rather at ease while looking for the reasons to praise themselves simply because the feeling of the self-esteem is something people in these countries are born with.

Attitude to time and punctuality may differ from culture to culture. As we have already mentioned of the popular saying in the USA is “time — is money”. Most Americans think of time as one of the biggest resources, they tend to schedule everything, including their daily routine. If you come to Latin America, you would be probably amazed how relaxed most people are regarding the time issue. The same is more likely to happen in the southern part of Italy. As for Russia, attitude to time will depend on the particular city. If you are in a regional capital, you will be expected to be on time, and your partners will also be punctual. As for the smaller settlements, you should probably relax a little bit and do not expect your local partners to be at their office at “7 SHARP”.

Understanding different cultures codes and being ready to accept the numerous behavioral models is a key to successful communication. As we learn more about people who come from different cultural background, we enable our personal and professional growth, and, thus become better cross-cultural managers.

It is generally accepted that cross-cultural conflicts are the conflicts that are usually caused by misinterpretation of certain cultural codes by the representatives of another culture. However, by definition, conflict occurring between individuals or social groups that are separated by cultural boundaries can be considered as cross-cultural conflict. But sometimes even individuals, who live in the same society, are potentially members of many different groups, organized in different ways by different criteria: for example, by kinship into families or clans; by language, religion, ethnicity, or nationality; by social and economic characteristics into social classes; by geographical region into political interest groups; and by education, occupation, or institutional memberships into professions,

trade unions, organizations, industries, bureaucracies, political parties, or militaries. The more complex and differentiated the society is the more numerous are potential groupings. Each of these groups is a potential “container” for culture, and thus any complex society is likely to be made up of various “subcultures”, that is of individuals who, by virtue of overlapping and multiple group memberships, are themselves “multicultural”. This means that conflict across cultural boundaries may occur simultaneously at many different levels, not just at the higher levels of social grouping — for example, those that separate “American” from “Japanese” cultures [Avruch].

Quite often conflicts occur, because the bearers of the different behavioral patterns are not able to understand each other and accept another point of view. For example, American professors who were teaching in Russian in the framework of exchange programs found it difficult to tolerate a very special understanding of the team spirit by the Russian students: they were likely to share notes with each other and did not consider cheating illegal. They tended to prompt the answers to their peers during written and oral tests and everybody seemed to be OK with it.

Likewise, Russian students who participated in academic and cultural exchange programs and studied in the US high schools and Universities could not understand why Americans were not eager to share their notes, cheat at the exams. It took some time for the representatives of both sides to understand the cultural codes and accept the differences between Russian and American concept of friendship: in the USA if you really wish to help your friend you will probably tell him where the best resources could be found, when the local library is open and who are the experts on the issue you need to study. In Russia, however, a true friend is expected to share his notes before and even during the test. Of course, there are students who feel that they have no obligations and therefore are not likely to share their homework with some “unconcerned absentees”, but the general notion is that there is nothing wrong about cheating. These are the details that could not be revealed from the first glance at the foreign culture, but being aware of the differences between behavioral codes will certainly promote effective communication and help to overcome cultural barriers.

The scholars and experts on cross-cultural communication suggest applying a number of approaches that should lead to better understanding. One of this approaches is closely related to the definitions of culture, which we have already mentioned earlier in this chapter. As we have said, some experts suggest that different cultures could be regarded as **specific** or **diffuse**.

For example, according to Fons Trompenaars, a specific culture is one in which individuals have a large public space they readily share with others and small private space guard closely and share with only close friends and associates. a diffuse culture is one in which public space and private space are similar in size and individuals guard their public space carefully, because entry into public space affords entry into private space as well. It looks at how a separate culture keeps its personal and public lives [Trompenaars et al.].

Some experts suggest that different cultures could be regarded as **specific and diffuse**. Specific cultures have a small area of privacy, which is clearly separated from public life (USA). They have many personalities/sectors where they are acting and just there like socializing in clubs and organizations. **Diffuse** cultures (Germany, France, China) are concerned with keeping people's face. In diffuse cultures so much more time is taken to get to the point. It is done to avoid private confrontations so the interlocutor or groups won't feel offended and won't take disagreements personally. Germans have a high degree of privacy and share just a low percentage with public. Americans have a small degree of privacy and share these public sectors (clubs e. g.) very easily and freely with members of these areas. It is one reason why the Americans seem to be so friendly and open in view of the Northern Europe, but this commitment doesn't mean that much as in France or in Germany.

For example, the Chinese belong to the diffuse societies. If a European manager is invited to come to the Chinese home, he would share nearly everything they have to be a good host. The guest becomes a close person because of the established close relationship. This is very important in diffuse cultures to built up close relationships in business life. This requires a lot of information which has to be exchanged in advance

of a business deal. Some may look irrelevant but they are important. Via this procedure Chinese become capable to get a more detailed picture about their business partner and their characters. So, the main rule is to be flexible. In some case it might be important to built up a close relationship than the deal itself. In others, personal relationship would not have such a deep meaning. For example, people from diffusive cultures circle around the strange business partner to get to know him more deeply and they will discuss the specific facts only after a relationship of trust has been created. Americans tend to get normally straight to the point and if the opponent shows still interest then they start circling around him to reach their goal — closing the deal.

There are certainly more parameters that help to differentiate numerous cultures that exist in the today's world. Besides, as every scholar would probably agree there is no culture of classical type: every culture could be described as a combination of factors and features. However, for every culture a series of dominating characteristics could be determined during a particular time period. Those characteristics are closely related to the history of the country and its geopolitical conditions.

Workshop

Individual assignment 1 (an essay)

Write an essay based on the theoretical material. The essay should contain two parts — theoretical and practical. For the first part select 3 sources and summarize the key ideas, highlighted by the author. Share your own understanding of the theoretic material by expressing your views and ideas. In the second part provide an example from your private/professional life, concerning cross-cultural tensions, cultural differences and the way your coped with this problem. Analyze your behavior, considering the following set of criteria:

- your own national and culture rational;
- main reasons of misunderstanding (if any occurred);
- ways to overcome the cultural tensions.

Individual assignment 2 (a report)

Select an article from an academic source/newspaper/magazine, where the problem of cultural stereotypes is covered. For example, this could be a series of publications (1–3) related to the cultural differences and behavioral strategies used by people who come from different cultural backgrounds. Write your report, explaining, whether do you think it would be possible to reach a consensus without offending the representatives of the other side? What are the main stereotypes concerning your own culture? Mention at least five and explain their possible origins.

Chapter 3

PREPARING TO WORK IN THE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY

Cultural barriers and ways to overcome them. Dealing with culture shock — how to choose an appropriate strategy. National identity vs. cross-cultural identity. Cross-cultural communication skills and dealing with international partners

Very often when we meet representatives who come from another culture, we have to deal with cultural barriers. Those who want to communicate effectively in the global marketplace need to learn more about the nature of these barriers and ways to overcome them. Here are the common cultural barriers that effect the process of communication and management styles.

1. Language barriers

Misunderstandings occur among people who belong to the same culture, so there is no surprise that people from different cultural backgrounds have problems understanding each other. These barriers are related to mispronunciation of one word and incomprehension of the entire phrase can lead to misunderstandings. For example, if a young scholar from Naples (Italy) comes to Berlin (Germany) to conduct a research, is told to complete an assignment “soon”, the two parties may have a different interpretation of the word “soon”. Language is a reflection of culture, and different cultures have very different ways of assigning meanings to words. It is well known, that Germans have their own understanding of time and punctuality, while Italians (especially those who come from the South) are more flexible with time issues.

2. Behavior

Ineffective communication could be the result of discrepancies and different interpretation of body language and other behaviors. For example, in the US, it is important to make eye contact with someone who is speaking to you or they may think you are distracted or uninterested. However, in many Asian countries, eye contact can be a sign of disrespect

or a challenge to authority. There are many other cultural differences in body language that can create barriers to effective communication. Those include differences in facial expressions, the use of nodding to indicate agreement or understanding, and the amount of space to give someone with whom you are having a conversation.

3. Stereotypes

Stereotypes are assumptions people make about the characteristics of members of a cultural or social group. Sometimes stereotypes could be negative or even hostile and thus, become a serious barrier to workplace communication. For example, if you are working in a international company and make a religiously oriented joke about your Arab colleague, you may damage your professional relationship. While some cultures may share a general set of characteristics, it is never okay to assume that individual members of a group have those same characteristics.

4. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to judge other groups according to the standards and values of one's own group. Ethnocentric views not only act as a communication barrier but can hinder employee morale and productivity. If you come from a culture where it is important to make small talk prior to conducting business, you may consider someone who gets right to the point to be rude. However, from another cultural perspective, it is both acceptable and efficient to get right down to business.

We believe, that the best way to deal with cultural barriers is to show respect toward the new culture. It is important to remember that by accepting another set of values and new behavioral patterns people are not depreciating the role of their native culture in their life diminishing their own life, but rather broadening their mental horizons and becoming more of the individuals.

We consider the following rules to be helpful in understanding new culture and dealing with cultural barriers:

- recognize new values as part of “another culture”;
- show respect toward new cultural codes;
- be curious;
- be flexible;

— try not to judge people by their nationality, race, color of skin, but by their character and by what who they really are.

— remember that when someone does something you don't like, perhaps think of it as they are simply solving a problem in a different way than you would.

As Dalai Lama once said “People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost”. Observing this rule will eventually help people around the world become more open-minded and tolerant towards the others.

Very often, when working in a multicultural organization people may hear the term culture shock. This term was originally popularized in 1960 by an anthropologist Kalervo Oberg. He used it to describe the problems of adjustment among Americans who were working in a health project in Brazil [Weaver]. It is noticeable that initially culture shock was understood as an occupational disease of people who have suddenly been transported abroad, which is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our family signs and symbols of social intercourse [Oberg].

However, some scholars, for example Garry Weaver considers this to be a misleading model, because the culture shock is believed to be resulted from something external such as a “virus”, over which there is no control. The reality is culture shock is not a disease. First of all, it is a psychological phenomenon. It is a reaction to the stress of leaving one social environment and entering another. Second, some people react to the stress in one way, they might even become aggressive, some tend to stick to the same behavioral patterns, preferring not to demonstrate their personal feelings and emotions. Third, there is not cure. There is no pill to skip the period of culture shock, however, those people, who know what to anticipate seem to adjust relatively quicker to the new cultural environment versus those who have no information concerning this important stage [Weaver].

In the past half century, the phrase “culture shock” has become a basic part of the international sojourner's jargon and is now commonly used to describe any physical or emotional discomfort experienced by those adjusting to a new environment [Weaver]. Sometimes people refer “homesickness”, “adjustment difficulties”, “uprooting”, “culture

fatigue”, and many other terms that are also used to described the same phenomenon.

Think of a person, who grew up in a small settlement in Far East of Russia, has never traveled abroad, but suddenly was offered a position in one of the countries in Western Europe, let’s say in the city of Rotterdam in Holland. How will this person react to the new cultural environment? Will he adjust quickly to the new culture? Whether the person will be able to cope with frustration and disappointment depends on his personal characteristics, character traits. For example, if this is a sociable and easy-going person, he will probably make new friends with the representatives of the local community. This, in fact, will help him to overcome the first stage of culture shock. Besides, it is important to be well aware of what to expect. If this person attended a PRE — departure orientation, and was told by his trainers what he is more likely to experience, it will probably won’t take long to overcome the culture shock stage.

Personal comment

One of my friends from Latin America (Argentina) spent her junior year as an exchange student in the USA. Her name is Daniela, and she lived with a host family, participated actively in the life of the local community and attended a US high school. Daniela was a very sociable and cheerful young girl, so she practically did not have difficult time while going over the culture shock. Besides, she attended a series of seminars on culture shock before she left for the US. Therefore, Daniela felt much more at ease even during her first month in a new country considering her emotional and psychological health. She did exactly what she was told to do by her trainers — asked questions about the new culture, made friends with new people, participated actively in the life of the local community, shared knowledge about her home country. But the most important thing was that she never compared her home culture with the new one, the one she was introduced in the framework of the program. Daniela confessed that observing this rule “Not better, not worse, just different” helped her to accept some of the values and behavior patterns that she learnt. However, this also helped her to appreciate her home culture. She realized that there is no perfect culture in the world, everything is unique and precious. She did feel homesick

and started missing her family right before Christmas. Although feeling upset for a while, she still thought of the possible way to cheer herself up and she eventually came up with a brilliant idea. She decided to cook a National Argentinian meal and asked her host sisters to assist her. Finally, she invited everybody to the table and started talking about the way Christmas is celebrated in her home country. Daniela presented each of her host family member with a special gift she brought from home and everybody started asking her questions about her native city, family, and friends. This discussion really helped Daniela to get away from her sad thoughts and it also promoted better understanding between her and the members of the host family.

Daniela, probably, without realizing it, was able to provide greater self-control, responded proactively to culture shock, which ultimately maximized effective communication with the representatives of the new culture. She could not skip the culture shock stage, but did everything in her power to make this period smooth and less stressful.

Therefore, the most important things we need to know about culture shock are the following.

1. First of all, it is primarily an unconscious phenomenon. Most people have no idea why they are behaving the way they do. By understanding the process of adaptation, they will acknowledge that it is a normal reaction to the current situation.

2. For most people, culture shock occurs during the first month of their stay and may last from a couple of weeks to 5–6 months. Some people may experience it only upon their return to their home country.

3. The main cause of the culture shock is the collision of internal cultures, the loss of familiar cues, the breakdown of interpersonal communication, and the identity crisis.

4. How to cope with it? One of the best strategies to use while coping with the culture shock is proactive response to it as well as flex behavior:

- understand the dynamics of cross-cultural adaptation;
- control the reactions;
- do something — communicate;
- let go of family or friends back home;
- transfer or modify cues [Weaver].

Workshop

Individual assignment 1 (case study)

An exchange student from Irkutsk (Russia) during her stay in the USA was surprised that some of her classmates were not aware of the geographical position of her home city and did not know much about history of her home country. They did not even approach her with questions about life in her home country. Later on, during her meeting with the local area representative she was offered to...

Answer the case questions.

- 1) In your opinion, what made the student feel so upset?
- 2) What might she have been offered by the local area representative?
- 3) How do you think the relationship with the classmates changed by the end of the academic year?

Write an answer, and when you are done, look at the sample answer.

Sample answer

She was offered to organize an informal meeting with her classmates and share some facts about Russia with her new friends. As soon as she got this done she noticed that people around started asking her more questions about life in Russia and she even volunteered to write for a School newspaper. By the end of the first semester she got 5 invitations for Christmas celebration from her new friends. As for her column in the school newspaper she started to get more questions both from the students and the teachers. By the end of her academic year, she published a series of articles about cultural exchange in a local newspaper.

Individual assignment 2 (an article)

Write an article, based on the information below. First, watch two video pieces — related to the activity of Greg Mortenson, a famous author and a peacemaker.

Use the following links:

- 1) www.youtube.com/watch?v=aB-OgKyPwqI

2) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOk6Q_EzY-A

In his book *Stones into School* he quoted one of the Afghan women who would not let her step daughter to become a school student: “A woman needs to work and not to read books. The books are going to poison your brain, and you will fail to become a successful mother and wife...” Nevertheless, Greg Mortenson and his Afghan friends managed to get supports from the local residents. What enables Mortenson to be successful?

Chapter 4

MODELS OF INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND MAIN FEATURES OF MANAGERS' TRAINING IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

Working in a multinational community. Individual as a bearer of national culture. Japanese and American management models

National businesses as national management styles are deeply affected by the fundamental values of the national culture, traditions, mentality and psychology of the entire nation. Different management models from Japanese to Latin American ones get closer together and lose their national features under current market conditions of globalization [Kaznachevskaya].

For example, the Japanese management model was influenced by the following factors:

- creative assimilation of the foreign experience in the field of organization and management;
- consecutive preservation of the country's national traditions.

The Japanese management style is affected by the following features of the national character:

- diligence;
- emotional restraint;
- tactful approach;
- economic attitude to life;
- open-mindedness.

People in Japan have been constantly suggested that “A good man is the one who is working”. Work brings the true meaning to the life of Japanese. The survey conducted in 1960-s in Japan actually proved that the presence of defective goods is a result of poor management.

The Japanese show high level of devotion to their work place and colleagues. The company or the organization is like a family. Even while talking among each other and discussing things with colleagues,

the Japanese use the word “Uchi” (which means a family or home) [Kaznachevskaya]. The Japanese don’t regard themselves as individuals, but rather as members of a certain group. Each person’s behavior is aimed at reaching one common goal. The most valuable character trait is the ability to regard the collective goal as of paramount importance and do one’s best in order to contribute to the team’s work. Once a person is hired to work in a particular company, he/she starts considering this fact as a benefaction and feels indebted until the end of his life.

As for the future managers’ training, the main role here is played by the Japanese companies and enterprises. These companies work out their own training system, while Universities concentrate on the general education program. The future top-managers and company leaders are trained within the company, this is often called “learning by experience”. Future leaders are gradually appointed to different positions and, therefore are able to learn more about different professional areas, get to know their own enterprise better and become highly qualified professionals [Kaznachevskaya]. Politeness, sensitivity and good manners appear to be the pillars of Japanese business etiquette just as they are of business etiquette in Europe or the US. The main difference is that Japanese business etiquette is more formal — especially so at a first meeting when the exchanging of the infamous Japanese business card is almost ritualistic.

However, there are certain aspects of Japanese business etiquette (for example business attire) that are very traditional compared to business in the US and Europe and certain situations, where you must be very sensitive. As for the foreign company executives though, Japanese business etiquette is not too different from that of Germany, France or the UK and while very different on the surface from US business etiquette, it is not so different once you get to know the people you are dealing with.

Fortunately, when a foreigner comes to Japan, he/she is not likely to be not be measured as strictly as local businesspeople and minor transgressions will be tolerated and may even help break the ice. The key issues to be aware of are almost all related to initial meetings — especially with senior executives of large companies. As time passes and your

relationship with a customer strengthens, the formalities will lessen- although never to the same extent as in the US.

It is generally agreed, that the Japanese management system is one of the most effective ones in the world. One of its obvious advantages is ability to work with people. According to Akio Morito, a successful businessman and a co-founder of Sony corporation, “the most important mission for a Japanese manager is to develop a healthy relationship with his employees, to create a family-like feeling within the corporation, a feeling that employees and managers share the same fate. We will try to create conditions where persons could come together in a spirit of teamwork, and exercise to their heart’s desire their technological capacity” [Kaznachevskaya, p. 68].

Now let us move on to the national characteristics of American management. The following factors have a serious impact on the Western business etiquette:

- ability to fight till the very end;
- highlighting their exclusiveness;
- vitality;
- struggling for leadership.

We tend to associate the Western management style with democracy. However, if we move to the visual examination we will notice, that majority of American companies are based on stern discipline, although “liberal” ideas are keep gaining popularity.

American managers are traditionally oriented toward results and individual values. The general management structure in the Western companies is based on the individual responsibility and individual progress assessment. The range of responsibilities of a particular employee is specified, each department head is in charge of particular tasks and projects.

Recruitment of the personnel is based on the following criteria:

- education;
- professional experience;
- psychological compatibility.

A very important role in the development of management skills in the West is played by the system of education. Managers training consist of three stages.

1) Upon completion of the University program the students acquire a Bachelor's degree (BA).

2) This is followed by pursuing a Master Degree (two-year program).

3) Upon completion of the MA program some students apply for PhD (Candidate of Science). This means the student will have to defend a thesis. Those pursuing a PhD are supposed to be enrolled in teaching process as well, they work as TA (Teacher's Assistants), participate in numerous conferences, write articles for academic journals.

In order to strengthen the connection between the science and the practice many Business Schools sign contracts with former CEO (chief executive officers), people with solid professional experience and with a degree in their field of study.

Therefore, the main focus of the Western management training is on education, while in the Japanese system the future managers are mainly trained within the organizations.

Despite the differences between American and Japanese management system, they share certain principles and norms that foster their professional growth:

- initiative;
- flexibility;
- unflagging discipline;
- striving for high quality of professional performance;
- high degree of competence;
- ability to attract creative employees;
- strict control concerning the profits and expenses;
- strong desire to perform better than the rest of the competitors.

Considering the fact that today the number of companies engaged in international trade is increasing, one should definitely take into account differences in personal and professional attitudes. However, one should also remember that the more he will learn from the foreign culture, the more effectively he will operate within his own.

Workshop

Individual assignment 1 (a review)

Watch an interview with Pellegrino Riccardi: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMyofREc5Jk>

According to the speaker, what are the main challenges of cross-cultural communication? Why curiosity is important in developing the cross-cultural competence? Write a review for the students' newspaper. The answers to the questions should be included in your review.

Individual assignment 2 (a letter)

You are planning a trip to another country. Apart from learning new words and looking through a tourist guide, what aspects of the foreign culture you are going to scrutinize more carefully? Why? Write a letter to your friend, who has already been abroad, asking for advice.

Chapter 5

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Communication, culture, use of language. Emotional intelligence. Origins of national character. Interaction of the national and corporate cultures. Models of corporate cultures in various societies and cultural groups. Russian and American business habits

In order to perform successfully in the global environment managers need to be familiar with the term “intercultural competence” (IC). Intercultural competence s are those knowledge, skills and attitudes that comprise a person’s ability to get along with, work and learn with people from diverse cultures. There are at least three components of the IC:

- linguistic competence;
- communicative competence;
- cultural competence.

Linguistic competence does not just imply the acquisition of language skills. It is somehow meant to change and supplement the existing world outlook regarding the cross-cultural experience of a particular individual. Moreover, linguistic competence is a relative concept. For example, a person who has just started learning some basic expressions and therefore claims to be able to communicate in in the foreign language on the basic level will be probably surprised when he discovers the abundance of idioms and professional expressions used by the native speakers. Would this meant that this person does not have a good command of the foreign language? First of all it depends on his initial needs. If this person is planning to go abroad on a tour, he will probably make a good use of the expressions he already knows, therefore he is competent enough for that. But if he is planning to set up a business in a foreign country, he should probably develop his speaking skills and enrich his vocabulary in order to increase his competence [Leontovich].

Communicative competence consists of techniques, strategies and skills that promote effective cross-cultural communication. A serious

role here is played by empathy and intuition. The main components of communicative competence are:

- activity;
- ability to accurately interpret messages and signals sent by the bearers of another culture;
- degree of involvement in the process of communication;
- ability to choose an appropriate topic for discussion, predict possible reaction, etc.;
- readiness to correct one's communicative behavior.

Cultural competence. The concept of cultural competence to a large degree coincides with the concept of cultural literacy. Among the first scholars to introduce the concept of cultural literacy was Eric Donald Hirsch, an American educator and academic. While describing cultural literacy he was referring mainly to the ability to understand and participate fluently in a given culture. Cultural literacy is an analogy to literacy proper (the ability to read and write letters). A literate reader knows the object-language's alphabet, grammar, and a sufficient set of vocabulary; a culturally literate person knows a given culture's signs and symbols, including its language, particular dialectic, stories, entertainment, idioms, idiosyncrasies, and so on. The culturally literate person is able to talk to and understand others of that culture with fluency, while the culturally illiterate person fails to understand culturally-conditioned allusions, references to past events, idiomatic expressions, jokes, names, places, and so on.

Personal comment

Here is an example of the high level of cultural literacy (two people, one from Russia and another one from Argentina are talking on the phone and discussing the current events):

- ¡Hola! Elida, how are you doing? (Hola — means “Hi” in Spanish).
- Hi, Lisa, I am fine. What about you?
- You know, there was a Russian Gala yesterday in Buenos Aires.
- Oh, great. Did you enjoy it?
- Oh, sure I did, I personally love Chaikovsky, Rakhmaninov and Glinka. This time the soloists of the Mariinsky Theater and Bolshoi

Theater together with the municipal philharmonic orchestra performed works of renowned composers. The concert hall was filled with the music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Antonin Dvořák, Gioacchino Rossini and Giuseppe Verdi, among others.

— How wonderful! I am glad you enjoyed the concert. I also heard that our presidents Vladimir Putin and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner signed a set of agreements to promote cultural and economic exchange between our two countries. By the way I am planning to write an article about the art of tango and perhaps I might come to Argentina to ask your comments on that issue.

— Sure, I will be happy to help you, please let me know when you are coming. I will cook ASADO (grilled meat) and Dulce de leche (a type of dessert)!

Qué bueno! Asta luego! (Oh, how wonderful! Yes, see you!)

It is obvious that both speakers are aware of some particular components of another culture. They mention the names of the composers, the names of the presidents of both countries and they show respect toward a foreign country. Besides, a presenter from Russia is also trying to use some Spanish expressions, which is always a good thing to do. So, even if you know just a few expressions — use them appropriately and you will notice that people would appreciate that.

According to Norhayati Zakaria, a researcher on International Business from Malaysia, three areas are crucial in developing cross-cultural competence.

1. Cultural awareness: Undergo general and culture-specific training, learn dos and don'ts.

2. Cultural sensitivity: Inculcate sensitivity, appreciation, tolerance and respect for others and diversity.

3. Cultural adroitness: Model culturally appropriate behaviors acting in ways that are appropriate and relevant to the people we are leading and managing [Zakaria].

Emotional intelligence

As we have already mentioned before, one of the key tools that enables effective business communication and fosters the development of personal relationship is emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different feelings and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior. There are three models of EI. One of the models of emotional intelligence was introduced by Daniel Goleman. It defines EI as an array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance.

According to Goleman, the impact of EI in the world of business is extremely high, particularly in the areas of leadership and employee development (a form of adult education). In addition to this, the Harvard Business Review has hailed emotional intelligence as “a ground-breaking, paradigm-shattering idea”, one of the most influential business ideas of the decade [Goleman].

The main idea here is that people who possess this ability to identify other people's emotions and express their own feelings in appropriate way are more likely to succeed both in personal and business life. Studies have shown that people with high EI have greater mental health, exemplary job performance, and more potent leadership skills. Markers of EI and methods of developing it have become more widely coveted in the past few decades. In addition, studies have begun to provide evidence to help characterize the neural mechanisms of emotional intelligence [Goleman].

The world's most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence quotient, or “EQ” for short. Here are some characteristics of high EQ leaders are:

- they cope successfully and proactively with life's demands and pressures;
- they build and leverage rewarding relationships with others;
- they are able to set and achieve personal and professional goals in a manner that is compatible with what is truly best for them and others;
- they seek first to understand, then to be understood;

— they act with great authority and are not afraid to make tough decisions;

— they lead by example;

— they are able to get the most out of others.

It's likely that emotional intelligence is going to continue to become even more important in the business world in the future than it is today. In an economy characterized by scarce labor, it's going to become increasingly important to hold on to the good employees. At the same time, competition for the best employees is going to become even more fierce, and good workers who feel they aren't treated fairly at work will have an easy time finding employment elsewhere.

One of the best strategies for the today's managers is to incorporate emotional intelligence into their personal and organizational management philosophy. Managers and business owners can't let themselves lose sight of the fact that their employees are people, with real lives and emotions that impact how they think, feel, and act. Managers with high level of emotional intelligence understand that their staff members are people first of all and workers second. This understanding helps managers to treat their employees adequately at all times.

Organizational Culture and National Culture: types of interaction

Organizational culture includes organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. It is a whole set of general values and beliefs that are being passed on to the new members of the company as a standard model of corporate behavior. Organizational culture is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules, that have been developed over time and are considered valid.

Organizational culture is also referred to as corporate culture, it's shown in (1) the ways the organization conducts its business, treats its employees, customers, and wider community; (2) the extent to which freedom is allowed in decision making, developing new ideas, and

personal expression, (3) how powerful and information flow through its hierarchy, and (4) how committed employees are towards collective objectives.

It is important to understand, that organizational culture is unique for every organization and one of the hardest things to change.

In order to understand the nature of corporate culture it is important to consider both its external and internal features or components.

External components include:

- dress code;
- behavior patterns;
- communications style.

Internal components include:

- personal commitment to the company;
- attitude to job responsibilities;
- system of motivation and promotion.

Whereas national culture consists of sets of norms, behaviors, beliefs and customs that exist within the population of the particular country. International companies develop management and other practices in accordance with the national culture they are operating in.

According to Geert Hofstede, our national culture relates to our deeply held values regarding, for example, good vs. evil, normal vs. abnormal, safe vs. dangerous, and rational vs. irrational. National cultural values are learned early, held deeply and change slowly over the course of generations. On the other hand, organizational culture is comprised of broad guidelines, which deal with organizational practices learned on the job [Hofstede].

Experts, including Dr. Hofstede, agree that changing organizational culture is difficult and takes time. What is often overlooked or at least underestimated when two or more companies merge/integrate is how the underlying personal values of employees affects how they perceive the corporate culture change efforts. A person can learn to adapt to processes and priorities, and a person can be persuaded to follow the exemplar behaviors of leaders in an organization. However, if these priorities and leadership traits go against the deeply held national cultural values of employees, corporate values (processes and practices) will be undermined [Hofstede].

National cultures, as we have already mentioned earlier, affect deeply the organizational (corporate) cultures. Now let us have a look how Russian and American cultures are being reflected in the business environment.

A. Attitude to life (Optimistic/Pessimistic; smiling)

If you ask your American colleague “How are you”, she/he will probably say: “I am fine/OK/pretty good”. Although this optimistic response does not always reflect the real state of affairs, it is quite common and generally understood in the West. People are supposed to answer in such a way, even if they are feeling sick or they worry about something. Sharing problems with everybody is not appropriate in the Western culture. Opposite to this, if you give the same answer to this question in Russia, you are more likely to be misunderstood. First, people might think you are showing off. Second, people in Russian are not accustomed to sharing positive emotions with the others due to the prejudices of different kinds. For example, after providing a positive answer a person might want to knock on wood three times not to scare the luck away.

There is a well-known joke that actually reproduces this attitude shown by the Russians and Americans.

A Russian businessperson was asked:

— How are things? How are you?

— Oh, don’t ask me. Everything is horrible. My wife has left me, I have lost my job, I am so upset...

Next day this guy bought a new car and a new flat.

An American was once asked:

— How are you doing? How is your business?

The answer was:

— Everything is just fine. I am doing well. I am very happy.

The following day he committed suicide.

Perhaps, the same explanation could be used while discussing the nature of American smile, which in Russia is often characterized as a fake one. It is almost impossible to see a senior citizen with a smile on the face. A smile here, in Russia, is often associated with flippancy, lack of serious approach. Perhaps, for the representatives of older generation it would be impossible to change their attitude and start smiling one day — as it

not only about the mobility of the face muscles, but rather more about general attitude to life. These things are not changed in one day. People are brought up with certain values and beliefs and in order to start looking at the world from a different perspective, one needs a flexible state of mind and, perhaps, be motivated.

However, it is interesting to note that some representatives of Russian culture, especially those who were born after perestroika (so-called generation Y-born after 1980) feel much freer while sharing their emotions and expressing their feelings. Perhaps, this has to do with the way they communicate with the entire world — as a rule those people start traveling early and gradually become engaged in cross-cultural communication. They appear to be more open-minded, flexible and free from some of the Soviet prejudice. For example, most of them try to avoid applying Black and White approach while communicating with the foreigners — they tend to judge people by the character. In addition, many of them do smile.

B. Inclination for deep analysis/simplification

Russians are well known to be fond of analysis, they look for causes and effects, but sometimes fail to put a complicated idea in a few word sentence and prepare a presentation on quantum mechanics for public. Americans, on the contrary, are believed to simplify things and pay attention to some “useless” issues. This can often lead to misunderstanding and ineffective business communication. The best way to prepare for an international meeting would be trying to find out beforehand what is appropriate and what is not for both parties involved. Sometimes, a business assistant or an interpreter could perform this.

Personal comment

I once had a chance to interpret for a local company who specialized on growing oyster mushrooms. The company had a feeling that something was going wrong in terms of marketing and thus asked for the help of an international consultant. This was an American expert. He came for a short visit and started the first meeting with collecting details for his future report. He asked a lot of questions concerning the company’s management style, technological issues, he also asked a lot about potential customers. I realized that the Russian businesspersons were not used to such type of conversation, and they looked a bit disappointed.

So, I suggested we all had a coffee-break, during which I explained to our businessmen that in the USA it is OK to ask many questions and get to the point right away. I also mentioned the difference in business attitude in our countries. Surprisingly the expressions on their faces changed. They looked encouraged and ready to continue their discussion. I also heard that when another Russian expert arrived to the office and started feeling puzzled, those men whispered to him: “Hey, Ivan, that is the way they do it in the US. He needs this information for his report. So that is OK”. I personally was happy to know that it took so little time for those people to learn the basic rule of cross-cultural communication: “Be curious and show respect for something that is new to you”.

C. Proactive approach/Reactive approach

The term “proactivity” was introduced to public by a famous American business coach Stephen Covey. In his book “The 7 habits of highly effective people” [Covey, p. 78].

Habit 1. Be Proactive is about taking responsibility for your life. You cannot keep blaming everything on your parents or grandparents. Proactive people recognize that they are “response-able”. They know they choose their behavior. Their physical environment, on the other hand, often affects reactive people. They find external sources to blame for their behavior. If the weather is good, they feel good. If it is not, it affects their attitude and performance, and they blame the weather.

Instead of reacting to or worrying about conditions over which they have little or no control, proactive people focus their time and energy on things they can control [Covey].

It actually comes as no surprise, that the author of this theory — Steven Covey, was raised by American culture, which is oriented toward individual success and is considered to be action-oriented. The initial reaction of an American to a problem or an obstacle will be a strong need to act. In contrast to this approach, reactive approach is more popularized by Russian culture, perhaps as a result of historical and political development of the country. A prominent Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyayev once said: “The Russian people do not want to become a courageous creator — the nature of the Russians people could be defined as feminine, submissive and passive in the state affairs; it is waiting for her husband, her fiance, her master” [Berdyayev, p. 171].

The Russian fatalism promotes a certain vision of things — people regard the obstacles as insurmountable, and therefore, there is no need to undertake any actions.

Personal comment

Here is an example of a typical reactive attitude. Mary, one of my close friends, faced this problem herself. She once talked to her relative — Zhenya, who was working in a joint venture and kept complaining that she could not get a job promotion, because she did not have a good command of the German language. Mary suggested that she would start giving Zhenya private lessons of German (which she knew perfectly well) free of charge. Zhenya joyfully agreed. Mary started planning lessons, she bought the textbooks and the video-tapes. What happened next was easy to predict. Zhenya attended the first two lessons, upon which she stated that German grammar was difficult for her and she would better quit. As we have mentioned before, this could be called a typical Soviet attitude, which demonstrates unwillingness to leave the comfort zone and change the world-view.

However, political, economic, and social changes have had a serious impact on people's minds and behavior. The changes are already happening — as we can see both representatives of middle age group and younger generation becoming proactive. I personally know a young woman — designer, who started her own project without any help from the side and has already, achieved much in her area of interest. Again, these changes do not happen fast, it will take time to make people understand that they are actually in charge of their life, they are the decision-makers, not the country, not the government, and that whatever dream you have, if you try hard, it will come true one day.

D. Emotionality vs. Rationality

Americans have always been famous for being pragmatically oriented nation. “We do not trust things that can't be measured”. This in part explains their logical, rational approach to emotional problems and situations [Leontovich]. The analytical mind of Americans is often perceived by other cultures as cold and personality deprived. For instance, when dealing with Russians, Americans sometimes fail to understand their emotional state. Russians, on the other hand, consider Americans

businesslike and thrifty, as they are known for relying on their emotional state even in business conditions. As stated by Richmond, while negotiating Americans prefer to discuss single points step-by-step and head for the final agreement. Russians choose more conceptual approach and very often ignore the specific details. But, generally it is easy to say whether a Russian businessman is happy with the results of negotiations or not — as his emotional state would be openly displayed in the course of the meeting [Richmond].

Viktor Hwang, the author of a recently published article in Forbes “What’s better for business: logic or emotion” argued that there is no need to avoid human nature even in business. “Business is best when the people providing goods and services feel passion and commitment to what they are producing and their customers feel they’ve received value. The operative word here is “feel”. When we use the term “rational” in business, we usually mean dispassionately data driven and informed by explicit measurable criteria” [Hwang].

Thus, in terms of cross-cultural management it is important to look for positive outcome instead of fighting for the “right approach to be used”. Perhaps, in some situations it is better to rely on the rationality, while some issues will require a rather emotional evaluation. The main rule to remember is while in business one always needs to maneuver, keep the balance and think ahead.

Workshop

Individual assignment 1 (an essay)

How would you describe the concept of your own national character? Try to come up with at least five characteristics. Share this information and discuss with other students. Write your essay.

Individual assignment 2 (a report)

What are the key elements of individualistic culture? How are they reflected in the system of beliefs, customs, patterns of national behavior? Write your report.

Chapter 6

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE RUSSIAN BUSINESS CULTURE: ORIGINS, PROBLEMS, AND PERSPECTIVES

The Soviet heritage and its impact on the current state of Russian business: from Gorbachev's perestroika to Putin's time. Business traditions in modern Russia. Motivation and social responsibility

The today's Russian business culture is unique simply because it is relatively young and, second, because it comprises the Soviet heritage and the up-to-date features of the country's economic and social development. Although the country has already entered the stage of economic and political transformations (end of 80-s XX century), in some areas the approach to business could be still characterized as Soviet. In order to better understand how the economic system is functioning in today's Russia, one should have a look at its formation and development.

Actually, the term "business" in its broad meaning is relatively new to the Russians, because those who were born in the XX century heard a lot about the planned economy, where everything was under control of the state. In 1986, the major transformation from the planned economy to the market-driven one started with Gorbachev's perestroika. In the beginning of 90-s of the XX century people faced with the negative consequence of the "shock therapy" (economic reformed inspired by a young politician Egor Gaidar). As some eyewitnesses recall this period: "We came to the local grocery store on January 1, 1992, and were amazed by a wide selection of goods. But our amazement turned into real shock, when we looked at the prices. Everything became so expensive!" The hyper-inflation wiped out savings, devalued salaries and pensions, leaving the entire economy in turmoil. That was also the time when the phenomenon of shuttle traders (so-called "chelnoki") was born. What happened was people realized they had to get the money to provide their families, to help their elder parents and simply to survive. Many women

started traveling abroad for a short period of time to buy up clothes and sell them afterward at the local markets. Some traveled to Greece mainly to buy fur coats, while most of the shuttle-traders headed for Istanbul (Turkey), where they established business relationship with the local sales men looking for future deals. Not surprisingly, all the goods that were brought by the traders overseas were sold out quickly on the Russian markets as the customers were longing for variety of cloths, especially after years of deficiency. Many small businesses were opened up and started functioning during this period.

These changes were accompanied by acute economic crisis, as during the 1991–1996 the country's GDP fell every year, reaching even double-digit proportions in some years. The country was not able to attract much foreign capital — not for lack of opportunity or desire, but because investors were deterred by the high level of corruption, legal chaos and political instability [White].

By 1997, according to a promarket-pioneer, Rose Brady, “a bigger share of property was in private hands in Russia than in Italy. However, as in Italy, in Russia large conglomerates held leading places in industry, and they were made up of formerly state-owned structures that had been privatized. Like Italy's, Russia's underground operated freely alongside the real economy, and people thought nothing of not paying the state's exorbitantly high taxes. As in Italy, in Russia the mafia controlled important sectors of the economy. And, as in Italy, in Russia the state was so weak that people had largely lost faith in the idea that government would help them”. At this time, “70 % of GDP was produced by the private sector” [White, p. 156].

Boris Berezovsky (a Russian businessman and oligarch), boasted that just six private banks (his among them) controlled over 50 % of the economy and could dictate, as they did in relation to Viktor Chernomyrdin, who the government should have as premier. Yeltsin was continually promising that the bottom of the collapse had been reached and things could only get better. Then came the Asian crisis followed by the very special Russian debt crisis. In 1998, Yeltsin was forced to revalue the ruble and default on its international loan repayments in another Latin American-style catastrophe. The ruble lost

three-quarters of its value, slumping from six to the dollar to 20 in just three weeks. This led to another round of mass non-payment of wages [Smorodinskaya].

The financial crisis of August 1998 was a culmination of an unparalleled economic decline which commenced with the disastrous “shock therapy” in Yeltsin’s first term. The government liberalized the most sectors, cut subsidies and social expenditures, and privatized almost 70 % of the state enterprises by 1996. Besides, the qualitative regressions took place: as investment collapsed and Soviet factories faced withering competition from world markets, Russia devoted into a supplier of raw materials and energy resources. The manufacturing either shut down or converted to production of low-grade consumer goods. For example, the aerospace branch that had earlier produced 2 500 planes per annum and accounted for 60 per cent of the world’s fleet was virtually, producing a mere four airplanes in 2000 (compared to the 489 from Boeing). The Russian economy became heavily dependent upon volatile markets subject to huge price fluctuation. The agricultural sector was also negatively affected by lack of state subsidies, private capital, and effective demand. As a result, agricultural producers reduced the use of fertilizers — by 89 per cent and even machinery (as petrol consumption dropped by 74 per cent) [White].

The Putin government has assigned a high priority to measures that can ensure sustained growth, not only in the energy branches, but in other sectors as well. The economic reforms were comprehensive and diverse. The government has also tightened control over monetary transfers (with obligatory reporting on larger sums) both to impede illegal capital flight and to satisfy international demands that it combat money laundering. The underlying goal was to make Russia a more attractive environment for foreign direct investment, and to stem capital flight. In the short term Putin’s economic policy has continued to yield positive results — it is proved to be attractive to international investors. However, not everything was so rosy. The country faced a major spike in the payments to service and extinguished its foreign debt [White].

While approaching the issue of general state of the Russian corporate culture, experts in economy and social science often refer to it as

subculture of the news business owners [Schekina]. This formation of this subculture occurred during the following periods:

1990–1993 — the period of primary accumulation of capital and high level of business activity;

1993–2000 — the period of interpenetration of the wealth and the power, which led to the formation of oligarchy;

2000-up to present time — the period which is characterized by gradual removal of the new Russian businessmen (those who made a fortune in the beginning of 90-s) from power, changes in customers' orientations [Prigozhin].

Some experts refer to the concept, offered by Hofstede and describe Russian corporate culture as the one, where the Soviet type of the command management is present. “Where the Western employer appeals to the rules and general guidelines, the Russian worker addresses the boss. That is how the vertical corporate structure functions” [Kuznetsov, p. 25].

Minding all of the above, we can state that in modern Russia the task of developing adequate attitudes in terms of business culture remains to be a formidable challenge [Kuznetsov]. We believe, that the complexity of this task is caused by the following factors (sometimes viewed as contradictory):

— business sector in Russia has been developing rapidly, it has undergone radical transformation and needs to be approached in a completely new way, different from the one used in previous decades;

— Russian mentality, Russian culture, and Russian national character, which do have a serious impact on decision-making process of any kind, are still in the stage of transition. These things, unlike prices and interest rates, have to do with general perception of world, individual attitude to life and can't be changed overnight.

It is obvious, that the rapid development of the Russian economic sector has left Russian cultural values and national traditional approaches. It will take at least a decade or even longer for cultural traditions and national mind to adjust to those changes.

To a large degree business image of Russia is closely related to the Russian national character. In particular, it is deeply affected by the following features of the Russian national character:

- collectivism;
- reactive approach;
- emotionality;
- tendency to cooperate;
- pessimistic attitude;
- high degree of tolerance;
- open-mindedness.

Of course, these are all rather relative features, or average characteristics of the Russian people. However, considering dramatic changes that affect every sector of country's life it is quite possible to imagine a modern Russian businessman as a person who appears to be optimistic, goal-oriented, down-to-earth, proactive, and aimed at individual success.

In fact, there are plenty of young people who's behavior would probably correspond with the characteristics mentioned above. The main idea here is that today the society in general and business community in particular are very diverse. Thus, people who want to do business and communicate effectively with the representatives of the Russian culture have to take this fact into account: as you never know who your partner is going to be like — reminder of the Soviet past with its typical features or a businessman of a new type, who is aware of the global trends and international business etiquette.

What should also be considered, while dealing with the today's business culture in Russia is a huge infrastructural gap between big and small cities. For example, a lot of money is being invested in the social and economic development of the capital cities, like Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, whereas smaller settlements like Novouralsk, San-Donato, Verkhny Ufaley are left behind. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, many of the 800 or so small towns in the Russian Federation have found themselves in a state of crisis. Across the country, cultural and historical landmarks are in terrible disrepair, infrastructure is crumbling, and social tensions are running high, chiefly as a result of the federal government no longer providing adequate subsidies [Smorodinskaya]. What is happening at the moment is that young people from smaller cities start looking for a job in the regional capitals and very

often move there, because of the better living conditions. Pensioners and those who have already settled down are the ones left in the smaller cities. This fact has a tremendous impact on the general state of business culture and should be taken into consideration by everyone planning to be engaged in business with the Russians.

Helpful tips: how to deal with Russians

1. People

As we have already mentioned, Russia has had a long history of totalitarianism, which has resulted in a rather fatalistic approach to living. The desire to work individually under personal initiative was suppressed by the Czarist and Communist states. With the advent of perestroika (restructuring), the Soviet/Communist value system has been scrapped, but the pace of reform has been slow and many are finding it very difficult to adapt to the Western values of individualism and profit maximization. Older Russians are generally quite pessimistic and don't have much faith in a better life in the future. Younger urban Russians have adopted a more Western outlook on life.

2. Meetings and greetings

Do not expect friendly smiles. If people have serious expressions on their faces, this does not necessarily mean they are not happy with the deal or agreement which is being discussed. This is just a habit — so to win sympathy and trust try to mirror this habit — look serious and don't smile too often.

A handshake is always appropriate (but not obligatory) when greeting or leaving, regardless of the relationship. Remove your gloves before shaking hands. Don't shake hands over a threshold (Russian folk belief holds that this action will lead to an argument). In fact, some Russians, even pragmatic businessman appear to be very superstitious.

3. Body language

It is usually easy to tell what kind of emotional state the Russians are in, since in most cases they would be using body language actively: hugs, backslapping, kisses on the cheeks and other expansive gestures are common among friends or acquaintances and between members of the same sex.

Speaking about the distance, Russians normally stand close when talking.

Be careful with some gestures, especially with the OK sign, as not everybody associates it with the real Western meaning. Almost every gesture using fingers is sure to offend someone, somewhere, at some time. As a rule of thumb (no pun intended!), it is best to avoid using any single finger as a gesture — unless you are *absolutely sure* it is appropriate for a particular culture or country. Open-handed gestures, with all fingers generally together, is usually considered the safest approach [Smorodinskaya].

4. Corporate Culture

1. Russian appreciate punctuality. Business meetings generally begin on time.

2. Business cards are handed out liberally in Russia and are always exchanged at business meetings. The ceremony of presenting and receiving business cards is important. Don't treat it lightly.

3. Representatives of the Russian company or government body are usually seated on one side of a table at meetings with guests on the other side.

4. Russians usually negotiate technical issues very competently, directly and clearly but, being newcomers to capitalism, often do not fully understand Western business practices and objectives. You may have to explain the reasoning behind some of your demands.

5. Last, but not least — personal relationship DOES play a crucial role in Russian business.

5. Dress

According to some experts, a “serious” businessperson is expected to look formal and conservative. Wearing very light or bright colors might make you appear lazy or unreliable to a Russian. Men should wear suits and ties. Women should wear suits and dresses or pantsuits. However, everything depends on the company and the type of meetings or negotiations. If it is a formal event, both guests and participants would be expected to stick to “official business style”. But if it is a meeting within a company, sometimes it is OK to take it easy on the clothes and dress in casual style. For example, when my colleague was assisting an expert

on cattle breeding during his visit to the local company, she noticed that all the Russian businessmen were dressed officially during the first two days, but changed and started wearing jeans and jumpers the following days. Actually an expert from the USA was wearing jeans all the time. Since this was training session accompanied by discussions with different groups of experts casual style seemed to be appropriate.

6. Gifts

1. A small business gift is always appropriate, but its value should correspond to the rank of the Russian businessperson with whom you are meeting.

2. As a general rule, do not give items that are now easily obtainable in Russia.

3. Bring a gift for the hostess when visiting a Russian home. A small gift for a Russian child is always appropriate (and appreciated).

7. Helpful Hints

1. Russians are very proud of their culture and enjoy opportunities to talk about their music, art, literature and dance. Knowledge about art, music and some Russian history is appreciated.

2. If you refer to a Russian as “Comrade”, be ready for some jokes as this word is associated with the Soviet period, which many people like to recall with a sarcastic smile.

3. It is difficult for some Russians to find the golden mean in terms of communication as Black and White approach, popular in the Soviet Union still remains to be an obstacle for many locals. You would either be considered a friend, and thus all the doors will be open for you, or you would be perceived as an enemy. It is also interesting that Russians find it difficult drawing the limits between private life and business affairs. Therefore, a friendly manner of conversation and positive attitude of a foreigner followed by a refuse to sign an important agreement would be definitely misunderstood and referred to as hypocritical.

4. Learn some Russian! Learning the language is of incalculable value, and is the best way to win friends for yourself, your company and your country. If that simply is not possible, try to learn at least a few phrases in Russian. It does not have to be perfect; Russians greatly appreciate any attempt by foreigners to speak their language.

Personal comment

A couple of years ago I was fortunate to participate in the International conference on Media Issues that was held in Moscow. Among the guest speakers were some scholars from different countries, including one professor from Hungary. This gentleman managed to win the Russian speaking audience right from the start — as not only did he speak Russian fluently, but he referred to some legendary figures, famous poets and scholars, and moreover, he even squeezed in a number of common idioms and professional slang. No wonder he got an invitation to lecture as a guest speaker at some other Universities apart from the Moscow State one.

Workshop

Individual assignment 1 (prepare a presentation)

Why doing business with Russians sometimes causes frustration among Western businesspersons? What are the main misconceptions about Russian business culture? Prepare your presentation.

Individual assignment 2 (case study)

Using this link read an abstract about the Russian national character.
http://www.russia-ic.com/culture_art/traditions/336/#.VUhN6zH8q6U
Answer the case questions.

1. Why do you think some Russians do not feel comfortable speaking about money issues?
2. How is this related to the idea of Russian soul and collective culture?

Chapter 7

MAIN ISSUES

IN THE GLOBAL BUSINESS CULTURE

The influence of globalization. Ethical dimensions of International management. Influences on managerial behaviors. Cross-cultural managerial ethical behaviors. Types of conflicts and styles of conflict management

Ethical dilemmas have always been among the central issue to human existence. Humans are social animals, and commonly held notions of what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior constitute the glue that hold societies together. Since time immemorial, Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Kant, Spinoza, Gandhi and many others have lectures and written about the principles of conduct governing individuals and groups, or the standard of behavior that constitute the focus of ethics. Ethics (also moral philosophy) is traditionally understood as the branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. Business ethics (also corporate ethics) is a form of applied ethics or professional ethics that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that arise in a business environment. It applies to all aspects of business conduct and is relevant to the conduct of individuals and entire organizations [Carroll, Gagnon].

Business ethics is considered quite a new area of research and is believed to be related to the globalization of the worlds' economy. The typically large company now needs to operate in many countries around the world and must face a myriad of laws and customs or norms of behavior that can be quite confusing. Those norms and customs may differ from culture to culture and what is accepted by one country does not necessarily fit into the general ethical concept of another's country behavioral norms. The problems start to arise when those rules and standards cause a clash often due to the initial understanding of ethical behavior within various cultures.

Here are the factors that influence ethical behavior

History

For example, it is unlikely that a Chinese businessperson will make a decision concerning the future development of his company himself, because historically traditions of collectivism and system of seniority have developed and grown popular in China. Nowadays this factor plays an important role in the ethical practices of Chinese and should be taken into consideration.

Geographical location

Italy has been victimized for natural disasters: volcanoes, floods, famines, and earthquakes. Thus, Italians tend to accept insecurity as a fact of life, which helps to explain why they are able to enjoy life more for the moment and are willing to accept events as they happen [Carroll, Gagnon].

Natural resources

Japan, for instance, is a small island nation that has few natural resources. It imported the practice of rice farming from China because this type of agriculture provided at least a subsistence level of living for all Japanese. For each village to survive it was necessary that all contribute and work hard at rice farming. Thus, harmony in working toward the common good became a top priority and a chief value underlying the Japanese perspective. Therefore, behaviors that tend to destroy this sense of harmony are normally classified as unacceptable and unethical [Carroll, Gagnon].

National culture itself has a tremendous impact on the ethical behavior

One of my colleagues, a University professor who once was invited to lecture in China still recalls a very specific attitude of the Chinese students to their teachers and mentors. After a case of plagiarism was discovered and a couple of girls officially pleaded guilty my colleague was sure that he actually got the message communicated, as he explained — “I just wanted the students to avoid plagiarism in their assignments and make sure they understand the reason why plagiarism is unacceptable”. However, the female students who were involved in this situation kept

approaching my colleague during the next days and kept asking him: “What do we have to do know? Please, tell us! We are ready to accept any kind of punishment”. This is a typical reaction for the people who were brought up in a very special atmosphere, where the system of seniority has been observed for a long time and subordination is learnt from childhood. However, if a Chinese professor is invited to lecture abroad, for example in Europe or in the USA, he is less likely to face this kind of reaction from the students, minding they were brought up within another system of values and beliefs and thus have a different understanding of “proper behavior of the student”.

Education

Education also affects the values and behaviors. For example, in Germany children are separated into four different types of schools at the end of fourth or sixth grade. Some of this separation is class related; because only wealthier parents can afford hiring tutors to help, their children pass the rigorous exams required for admission to the school that lead to a university degree and prosperous life. What can be inferred from it is that such educational approach reinforce the belief that there are natural and definite social class barriers in society and in many instances, individuals are born with special rights and obligations. It is certainly hard to identify precisely the cause and effect of this phenomenon. However, it may well be that in the United States more managers are punished for unethical behavior than in all other developed countries combine. This could be partly explained by the presence of the more open educated system that exists in the USA: some citizens, including managers, do not automatically have special rights and obligations that are different from those of other citizens [Carroll, Gagnon].

Religion

For instance, in the Arab world religion plays a much more important role in business than it does in other countries. Some of this is obvious like when the entire country shuts down several times a day for prayer. Other aspects are not so obvious, like the schemes that banks have to use to get around the prohibitions on lending money. It is important to keep in mind that not everybody in the Arab world is a Muslim. There are also

differences between the various Muslim sects so you have to be careful to not lump everybody together.

Among other factors that have an impact on the values and behaviors are laws, organizational cultures, and human resources management. There is trend for large companies within one nation to implement changes in their organization and thus make them look more similar to companies in other nations. For example, in Russia business culture has been rapidly changing since the country has shifted from the planned economy to the market one. Thus, managers and directors of many enterprises especially in bigger cities started to acquire the Western government style, became more open in terms of their relationship with the staff and business partners from other business areas.

Comparing managerial ethical practices across nations

Group orientation

A group-oriented culture needs mechanisms to strengthen the relationship between individuals and the group. In addition, group-oriented societies tend to grant their leaders much more freedom of discretion than do individuals in other societies. For instance, in Japan a subordinate will react more positively to harsh critique from the manager in comparison with his American counterpart. Individuals in Japanese companies are motivated by the needs not to lose face, rather than by their personal needs. Workers in Japan are discouraged from expressing ideas or opinions that compromise the current practices, or the harmony, or both of their organizations. Whistle-blowing is considered a taboo in Japan, because it violates the high value that the Japanese place on loyalty to the company (a “whistle-blower” is a person who tells police, reporters about someone engaged in an illicit activity). On the contrary, the United States recently passed legislation to protect the employment rights of whistle-blowers and to prevent retaliatory actions against them. American are more inclined to allow moral obligations; such as reporting a wrongdoing or injustice, to override loyalty to the company.

Bribery

Bribery is considered a standard way of doing business in many countries. Some nations' tolerance of bribery in conducting business is higher than others. Japan, although having a partial code against bribery, seems to maintain a high tolerance level for this practice. Actually, bribery in Japan is an "open kind of activity which is culturally accepted". It is worth mentioning that universally bribery is not accepted as an immoral, illegal or unethical business practice despite the American desire to level the playing field and assert an utilitarian ethical approach to replace all forms of bribery internationally with competition based solely on the merit of the products and services offered by nations. Although many countries have legislation prohibiting bribery, few actually seem to enforce violations or confront individuals involved in bribery.

False information

One serious issue that arises while talking about cross-cultural management is a degree to which various nations condone the practice of falsifying information. To add more lying itself appears to be a complex phenomenon. Lying and other forms of deception must be evaluated in terms of the specific intentions of the person. For example, collectivistically inclined individuals are more likely to lie or deceive others when the deception is related to group or family concerns. Individualists, on the other hand, are more likely to lie or deceive to protect their privacy. Similarly, individualists and collectivists use different forms of expressing expression when saying "no". Germans and Americans tend to be very direct in expressing the negative. Japanese and Chinese will usually say "may be" or "that would be difficult" in the same situation. In some collectivistic societies such as Ghana, businesspeople may give negative answer by not coming to the meeting [Carroll, Gagnon].

Gender equality

Gender equality is believed to be the most significant area where the interests of collectivistic and individualistic cultures clash. Although nations such as Sweden, the United States, and Denmark have made significant advances in this field, most of not all the collectivistic nations have supported only a few if nay major changes. What is considered to be acceptable and ethical treatment of women in some nations is viewed as

reprehensible in others. For example, in Russia many young women today are focused on their professional career and are less concerned about their family status as compared to their mothers and grandmothers. In fact, they do have more professional freedom as they can pursue various degrees and apply for job in different areas. However, very often these women are asked the following questions by Human Resource experts during the job interviews: “Miss, we like your CV, you are obviously a highly qualified professional, but, hey, why are you not married yet?” Or: “Are you planning to become a mother soon? Why not?” Or sometimes a young woman may be suggested by HR specialist “to start looking better for a proper man in order not to turn into a spinster”. These types of comments would be definitely classified as rude and inappropriate in most European countries and in the West as no woman would tolerate this attitude. However, in Russia and some Asian countries this behavior is normal and sometimes typical.

Japan and Saudi Arabia seem to emphasize gender inequality favoring men over women, especially in important positions or leadership roles in business organizations. It is interesting, however, that they do not use the word *inequality* in explaining such actions. In Japan women are expected to maintain domestic responsibilities while men dominate in the area of work. Saudi Arabia has laws prohibiting women from traveling alone, working with men, and working with non-Muslim foreigners. Generally Islamic notions of gender inequality are supported by Qur'an, a divine decree of social ordering that places women lower on the totem role than men. Theoretically this refers to all the Muslim countries, but if you give an intent look over the situation with gender issues in different countries you will find out that, the quality of life for women in Jordan, for example, is beyond comparison to the one in Afghanistan. This could be partially due to the numerous educational programs and general attitude of the ruling couple Queen Rania and King Abdullah of Jordan — to such issues of education and socialization of women. On the contrary, situation with the rights of women in Afghanistan is frightful. As Greg Mortenson stated in his book “Stones into schools”, although women have more freedom now with the end of the Taliban regime, life in many cities and smaller villages is guided by the old norms and stereotypes.

For example, for a young girl who wants to study at school, not to mention University or college degree it is important to receive an agreement from all the family members. If somebody objects, the girl has to obey. Perhaps, it will take a number of decades to change this type of mentality, which again would be considered intolerable in the West and Europe, but it still exists in Afghanistan and many provinces of Pakistan.

France has experienced a significant transformation in the workforce in recent years, with growing numbers of women entering the world of work and showing a desire to combine domestic and professional roles. As for women in Parliament, 20 per cent of elected National Assembly members are women, compared to 48.8 per cent in Rwanda and 47.3 per cent in Sweden. However, as some experts argue, France may be the home of “*égalité*” but gender equality in France is still a hot issue. In 2006, the average woman’s salary was 27 per cent lower than that of a man.

Even through the degree of individualism among nations is very predictive of attitudes towards gender equality, there are differences among nations stressing individualism. For instance, some American expatriates note that British males are uncomfortable with female managers, probably because of the tradition-based and conservative nature of British society. On the other hand, Chinese businessmen appear to be less comfortable with women managers than the American businessmen. Perhaps, in a long term perspective we will see these attitudes changed tremendously, but so far what is acceptable in terms of ethical treatment of women in the workplace varies greatly by culture, especially along individualism-collectivism dimension.

As many experts state, there has been a search for a universal set of ethical principles already for thousand years to be applied in the practice of business. Some even mention fundamental hyper-norms on the part of various international political and trade organizations, and the growing awareness among businessmen that ethical standards can enhance economic effectiveness. It is clear that organizational codes of ethics can influence the actual everyday behavior of company’s members and corporate ethical programs can actually do the same. What is more important is that those sets of principles and norms should be supported by the local governments, nation’s educational systems and

social programs of different kind. And that is the heart of the matter. Because who can say for sure how long will it take, for example, the Afghan social norms to be integrated into the universally accepted ethical code? What are the chances that the society where the norms of conduct are predominantly being dictated by the religiously-driven prejudice and have no explanation other than “we used to be that way and are not going to change our attitude in the nearest future” will easily transform and accept some rules and sets of values from the strangers? Perhaps, in this case a flexible approach should be applied, as patience and hope are believed to be helpful in going through all the necessary changes and overcoming difficult moments.

The truth is that one of the key issues in cross-cultural management is knowledge. The more we get to know about each other, the better we will be able to communicate. Due to globalization, we have already started to learn more about cultures, different from our own. This means a first step toward mutual understanding has been done. However, cross-cultural conflicts do take place. Sometimes initial misunderstanding that occurs between the representatives of different cultures causes them; sometimes these are the conflicts that could be classified according to the general conflict management styles. In this case, all the techniques that are applicable for business communication could be of great help. This issue along with the conflict resolutions patterns we are going to address in the following paragraphs.

Conflict management

As people from different cultures increasingly come together within and between the countries there is a likelihood that conflicts and misunderstanding will also increase. Conflict seems to be an appropriate topic for cross-cultural communication also because through communication we can minimize the impact of conflicts when it occurs. Both verbal and nonverbal communication can sooth tempers, settle misunderstanding and get the organization back on a normal work schedule [Lahiff, Penrose]. In general, conflicts could be regarded as part of our daily routine. In fact conflicts help people to communicate their messages more effectively. On

the other hand, conflicts can be destructive and damaging. Not only they affect the people involved, but they also make the interpersonal relationships and the psychological climate within the company uncomfortable. This, in turn, can have a negative impact on company's reputation. For future managers it seems to be of vital importance to be aware of the conditions leading to conflict and ways to cope with these situations.

There are different conditions leading to conflicts, among which are ambiguous jurisdictions, conflict of interest, communication barriers, or unresolved prior conflicts. Similarly, there are five distinctive episodes/stages of the conflict (often referred to as a conflict episode):

- a) latent conflict stage;
- b) perceived conflict stage;
- c) felt conflict stage;
- d) manifest conflict stage;
- e) conflict aftermath stage.

It is supposed that for every conflict episode it will take some time for each stage to develop and settle down. However, some conflicts have a tendency to stop dead at one of the stages — for example, latent or felt one. That is when the problem arises as the problem remains unattended, which, in turn, will be affecting the working spirit of the company team. This type of conflict is like an abscess, which needs to be considered and dealt with. For example, a misunderstanding occurred among the team leaders of two different working groups working for the same company. They have finally decided to ignore each other, but their subordinates simply can not follow this strategy as they need to continue business relations with their colleagues from another department. Minding that the subordinates are not authorized on their bosses' behavior, perhaps, it could become the company's director responsibility to find a solution to this problem. He might need to talk to each of the team leaders separately or else, but if he does not, the situation will become even more stressful and even dangerous for everybody involved.

What should also be considered in terms of conflicts is the way they are perceived. Perception plays a major role in conflict situations. In some cases perception might even become the cause of the conflict. Perception as it relates to conflict could be illustrated by five conflict levels.

1. Intraindividual conflict — occurs when a perceiver experience conflict within himself or herself. Such conflicts may arise from personal or job responsibilities and may influence job performance.

2. Interindividual conflict — exists between a perceiver and another individual within an organization.

3. Intragroup conflict — occurs between the perceiver and his or her immediate group within an organization, which can consist of a department, a work team, or union.

4. Intergroup conflicts arise between the perceiver's immediate group and another group within the organization.

5. Organization-environment conflicts arise between the perceiver's organization and the environment it is part of [Lahiff, Penrose].

Dealing with conflicts

The key objective of conflict management is to be able to distinguish between functional and dysfunctional conflict. Thus, conflict managers need to develop individuals who can work under conflict and tension and still be productive members of organization. In order to address a particular conflict situation and start dealing with it, a manager needs to understand it. The following steps could be followed as a method of conflict situation analysis.

1. Assess the importance and impact of the conflict.
2. Identify the type of conflict.
3. Select an overall strategy for dealing with the conflict.
4. Identify methods for reducing the conflict.

The following conflict resolution techniques could be applied.

Forcing

Also known as competing. An individual firmly pursues his or her own concerns despite the resistance of the other person. This may involve pushing one viewpoint at the expense of another or maintaining firm resistance to another person's actions.

Examples of when forcing may be appropriate in certain situations when all other, less forceful methods, don't work or are ineffective or when you need to stand up for your own rights, resist aggression and pressure.

Win-Win (Collaborating)

Also known as problem confronting or problem solving. Collaboration involves an attempt to work with the other person to find a win-win solution to the problem in hand — the one that most satisfies the concerns of both parties. The win-win approach sees conflict resolution as an opportunity to come to a mutually beneficial result. It includes identifying the underlying concerns of the opponents and finding an alternative which meets each party's concerns. Examples of when collaborating may be appropriate, when consensus and commitment of other parties is important and when a high level of trust is present.

Compromising

Compromising looks for an expedient and mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties. Examples of when compromise may be appropriate when the goals are moderately important and not worth the use of more assertive or more involving approaches, such as forcing or collaborating.

Withdrawing

Also known as avoiding. This is when a person does not pursue her/his own concerns or those of the opponent. He/she does not address the conflict, sidesteps, postpones or simply withdraws. Examples of when withdrawing may be appropriate, when the issue is trivial and not worth the effort.

Smoothing

Also known as accommodating. Smoothing is accommodating the concerns of other people first, rather than one's own concerns. Examples of when smoothing may be appropriate, when it is important to provide a temporary relief from the conflict or buy time until you are in a better position to respond/push back or when you have no choice or when continued competition would be detrimental.

Of course, some experts may suggest that it is important to prevent the conflict, rather than dealing with it, especially at the most complicated stage. In time younger generations will be born into a world of diversity. They will get used to interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds and, thus, to learn to overcome cross-cultural conflicts naturally. So far the best way to prevent conflicts is to avoid

perceiving our potential partners as enemies. It is better to look at the other people from a different perspective, as human beings worth being respected and understood. Study abroad, exchange programs are relatively inexpensive ways of bringing about better understanding between people while at the same time decreasing the appeal of simplistic stereotypes that perpetuate international conflicts. This kind of public diplomacy through international encounters not only directly benefits the individuals involved, it also changes national images. As many foreign experts agree the strongest ties among various cultures are built through interpersonal communication.

Personal comment

One of my friends used to work for a Russian-based international company, with each department holding responsibilities for a particular task. While working on the usual task and preparing a report to be submitted and shared with the rest of the working group my friend received a phone call from Mrs. X, her boss, who asked my friend not to include the data collected by the other department into the final report. My friend was going to follow these instructions, but the next minute she received another phone call — this was Mrs. Y — another department's head. Mrs. Y was wondering if he could have her department's data included into the final report as soon as possible. When my friend readdressed her boss, Mrs. X, and explained the situation to her, suggesting talking things over with Mrs. Y, she received the following answer: "There is no need to explain anything to them. Just do what I told you!" The problem was that my friend used to be in good terms with people from a neighboring department and their head, Mrs. Y in particular. Now wonder she felt puzzled. Luckily, she realized that she had the right to discuss this problem with the project general manager — Mrs. Z, who seemed to be open for discussing employee's private concerns. This happened to be a right decision as the big boss had been already aware of the "special nature" of relationship between Mrs. Y and Mrs. X. This way my friend actually managed to kill two birds with one stone as, first, she did not disobey her boss and, second, she did not ruin her friendly relationship with Mrs. Y. Both her personal and professional concerns were taken into account. Although, this particular case does not represent a universally applicable conflict

resolution pattern, it is definitely worth mentioning as it reminds us that in today's global business we need to be prepared for everything, even something unexpected. In addition, we need to be able to deal with these problems in an elegant way.

Workshop

Individual assignment 1 (a letter)

An American professor and a friend of yours who is currently working as a Teacher Assistant at one of the Russian Universities, asked you for help. He gave his Russian students an assignment, asking them to create an advertisement for a Nursing home for the senior citizens, and ultimately they failed to come up with any idea. Why do you think this happened? Write your letter, providing arguments and sharing answers with your friend.

Individual assignment 2 (case study)

A group of Russian tourists went on a tour to Italy. They did not have much problems while shopping in Rome and Milan, but when they came to Naples, they ended up waiting for the salesperson for 1,5 hour. When the shop owner finally arrived, the Russian tourists pointed on the announcement on the door, which said “out for lunch from 3 P. M. to 4 P. M.” and gave the him an unpleasant look (it was already 5:30 P. M.) However, the salesperson smiled at them and said: “Don't you know that...”

Answer the case questions.

1. What were the Russian tourists supposed to know?
2. How is this related to the Italian national culture?

SELF-ASSESSMENT TASKS

1. Cross-cultural management is based on theories and researches from the following disciplines:

- a) psychology, philosophy, communication;
- b) communication, psychology, management;
- c) anthropology, ethics, marketing;
- d) culture studies, philosophy, management.

2. Culture could be regarded as:

- a) systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people;
- b) cultivated behavior, accumulated experience of people;
- c) group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives;
- d) all of the above.

3. Alejo Carpentier was born in:

- a) Russia;
- b) France;
- c) Switzerland;
- d) Italy.

4. The Iceberg Analogy promotes understanding of:

- a) different dimensions of culture;
- b) different layers of the real Iceberg;
- c) historical traditions of a particular country;
- d) people's attitudes and beliefs.

5. Values and thought patterns are believed to:

- a) be easily understood by a foreigner;
- b) totally hidden part of culture;
- c) the part of human interaction;
- d) never be accepted by the strangers.

6. What was not included in Geert Hofstede's theory related to cross-cultural communication:

- a) uncertainty avoidance;
- b) power distance index;
- c) individualism;
- d) fatalism.

7. The attitude to time in American culture could be described the following way:

- a) every minute should count;
- b) no rush, no hurry;
- c) better late than never;
- d) all in good time.

8. According to Fons Trompenaars, in specific culture:

- a) individuals have large public space;
- b) individuals are required to limit their private space;
- c) public space and private space are similar in size;
- d) it is difficult to establish good relationship with a foreigner.

9. Chinese people are believed to:

- a) have naturalistic view to life;
- b) be family oriented;
- c) value the Confucian ethics;
- d) all of the above.

10. If you are planning to do business with the representatives of the Arab culture you'd better:

- a) send a young female to sign the initial agreements;
- b) send a middle-aged female to discuss the terms of agreement;
- c) send a middle-aged male to discuss the terms of agreement;
- d) send two young women to do all preparatory work.

11. While doing business in Brazil mind the following:

- a) getting things done is a lot about relationships;

- b) ability to play soccer will help you sign all the agreements;
- c) participating in the Brazilian Carnival will help to solve all the problems;
- d) knowing Portuguese slang will enable you to meet the necessary people.

12. The term culture shock was initially introduced by:

- a) Fried Doberman;
- b) Kalervo Oberg;
- c) France Toucan;
- d) Isadora Duncan.

13. Culture shock is not a disease, because:

- a) there is no external cause, nor cure;
- b) it is socially transmitted;
- c) it is a historical phenomenon;
- d) there are special drugs that can help skip the stages of culture shock.

14. What can help to overcome the culture shock:

- a) keeping in touch with family and friend back at home;
- b) avoiding contacts with the local residents;
- c) communicating with the locals actively;
- d) eating fast food and drinking water with gas.

15. The Japanese management style could be described as:

- a) democratic;
- b) autocratic;
- c) totalitarian;
- d) relationship-oriented.

16. The main focus of the Western management is on:

- a) education;
- b) team-building;
- c) profits and benefits;
- d) risk-avoidance.

17. The main components of intercultural competence are:

- a) communicative, physiological, historical;
- b) communicative, linguistic, and cultural;
- c) anthropological, cultural, and theoretical;
- d) pedagogical, political, and managerial.

18. Emotional intelligence is meant to:

- a) promote better task fulfillment;
- b) faster conflict resolution;
- c) assist in developing appropriate management style;
- d) help avoid interpersonal conflicts.

19. Which of the Hofstede dimensions is applicable to Russian culture?

- a) Low uncertainty avoidance;
- b) High Power distance;
- c) Masculinity;
- d) Individualism.

20. Double standards are usually present in the behavior of:

- a) the representatives of the high-context cultures;
- b) the representatives of the low-context cultures;
- c) the representatives of the African cultures;
- d) none of the above.

21. You have just entered a Japanese underground carriage. Walking inside you notice a middle-age couple entering the same carriage. A man is taking a seat, while a woman is standing in front of you holding a number of heavy bags. You:

- a) offer her a seat;
- b) start scolding a man out loud;
- c) force the man to stand up;
- d) quietly observe the situation.

22. Why is it recommend to avoid national proverbs and jokes while addressing a multicultural audience?

a) because even when translated properly those things might be misunderstood by the foreign colleagues;

b) foreigners are not likely to appreciate your national humor;

c) national proverbs should be kept in secret as part of the national heritage;

d) by doing this you might distract people from their thoughts.

23. The best culture in the world is:

a) the Oriental culture;

b) the Western culture;

c) the Russian culture;

d) there are no bad, or good cultures; every culture has its unique features and is worth being respected by others.

Answer key for self-assessment tasks

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 13. a |
| 2. d | 14. c |
| 3. c | 15. d |
| 4. a | 16. a |
| 5. b | 17. b |
| 6. d | 18. c |
| 7. a | 19. b |
| 8. a | 20. a |
| 9. d | 21. d |
| 10. c | 22. a |
| 11. a | 23. d |
| 12. b | |

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

How would you define culture?

What are the possible ways to explore culture?

Describe the Iceberg Analogy Model.

What cultural dimensions were mentioned in the theory of Geert Hofstede?

How does culture influence the national management style?

What are the differences between specific and diffuse cultures?

Name the most common cultural barriers.

Why is it important to avoid stereotypical perception of reality?

Is culture shock a disease?

What are the most effective ways to cope with culture shock?

What are the main features of the Japanese management style?

What factors had affected the Western business etiquette?

What do Japanese and American have in common in terms of business styles?

What are the main components of intercultural competence?

Who was the author of the cultural literacy concept?

What are the main characteristics of the culturally literate person?

What role does the emotional intelligence play in cross-cultural management?

What are the external and the internal element of the corporate culture?

What are the differences between the proactive and the reactive approaches to life?

What are the main attributes of the Russian business culture?

In what way has the Russian national character affected the business culture?

What role is played by interpersonal communication in terms of cross-cultural management?

What factors affect the ethical behavior of global communicators?

What conflict resolutions techniques do you know?

In your opinion, are there universal values appreciated by the representatives of different cultures?

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Учебное пособие

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